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Философия буддизма махаяны

Mahayana buddhist philosophy

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Mahayana Philosophy: Problems and Research

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Abstract. The introduction to the topic of this issue is an overview of the research articles authored by Russian, Lithuanian, and Indian scholars on various problems of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. While explaining the status of the terms “Mahāyāna” and “Hīnayāna,” the author emphasizes that since they represent the apologetic conceptualizations of Mahayanists, the appellation “Hīnayāna” (“Lesser Vehicle”, etc.) is not recognized either by those Buddhists who are supposed to be characterized by it, or by scholars striving for a neutral appellation. This creates difficulties, including the need for a generally accepted designation for this Buddhist tradition. However, despite the apologetic nature of the Mahāyāna — Hīnayāna opposition, the difference between the two is captured very plausibly. The first one teaches about the individual way of achieving liberation from the cycle of endless rebirths (saṃsāra) through a personal, individual self-perfection (the path of the arhat) leading to enlightenment (bodhi) and nirvāṇa (extinction of passions). The second one develops a full-fledged religion with its own pantheon and rituals, in which nirvāṇa and individual liberation, while remaining, more or less theoretically, the ultimate goal, are pushed to a distant plane. At the same time, the idea of compassion and the ideal of bodhisattva who, having taken a vow to help all living beings to get rid of sufferings, continues to remain in saṃsāra, is put forward in the center. However, despite this major difference a Buddhist discipline known as Abhidharma which consists in analysis and classification of discrete states of consciousness (dharmas), identified in meditation, remains a reference point in both traditions. Three authors touch upon it (Helen Ostrovskaya, Pradeep Gokhale, and Vladimir Korobov). Two of them (Ostrovskaya and Gokhale) focus on the problems of murder and death, and the third one (Korobov) dwells on the methodology of Abhidharma. Vladimir Ivanov offers a new interpretation of the structure of Śāntarakṣita’s treatise “Tattva-saṃgraha” with Kamalaśīla’s “Pañjikā” commentary. Yangutov and Lepekhov explore the specificity of Buddhism reception in China, Tibet, Mongolia, and Russia. Nesterkin publishes for the first time B. Baradiin’s theses for Agvan

Dordjiev's lecture, which exemplifies the Buryat Buddhist Renovationists' interpretation of Buddhism. Burmistrov analyzes the views of Indian historians of philosophy on the history of Buddhism, Volkova — the concepts of Buddhist ethics in contemporary analytical philosophy.

Keywords: Buddha, Buddhism, Buddhist philosophy, religion, Mahayana, Hinayana, Abhidharma, samsara, liberation, arhat, bodhisattva, India, China, Tibet, Mongolia, Russia

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Философия махаяны: проблемы и исследования

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Аннотация. Введение в тему данного номера представляет собой обзор исследований шести российских, а также литовского и индийского авторов по разным проблемам философии буддизма махаяны. Поясняя статус терминов «махаяна» и «хинаяна», автор подчеркивает, что они являются результатом концептуализаций сторонников махаяны, имеющих апологетический характер, и поэтому название «хинаяна» не признается ни теми буддистами, кого оно призвано характеризовать, ни учеными, стремящимися к нейтральной позиции. Это создает некоторые трудности, заключающиеся в отсутствии единого общепринятого обозначения для данного направления. Однако, несмотря на апологетический характер противопоставления махаяны — хинаяне, разница между этими направлениями буддизма схвачена весьма точно: первое представляет собой учение об индивидуальном пути освобождения от сансары через личное самосовершенствование, просветление и уход в нирвану (путь архата), а второе — религию с более развитой инфраструктурой, пантеоном и обрядами, в которой нирвана и индивидуальное освобождение, оставаясь конечной целью, отодвигаются на далекий план, в центр же выдвигается идея сострадания и фигура бодхисаттвы, который, приняв обет помогать всем живым существам избавиться от страданий, продолжает оставаться в этом мире и претерпевать перерождения. Однако несмотря на эту разницу, в обоих направлениях сохраняется важность Абхидхармы — буддийской дисциплины знания, содержащей классификацию и анализ дискретных состояний сознания (дхарм). Тема Абхидхармы как жанра аналитической литературы буддизма и как дисциплины знания затронута тремя авторами (Островской, Гокхале и Коробовым), два из которых (Островская и Гокхале) фокусируются, на проблемах убийства и смерти, соответственно, а третий (Коробов) — на вопросах методологии Абхидхармы. Иванов предлагает новую интерпретацию композиции трактата Шантаракшиты «Таттва-санграхи» с комментарием Камалашилы «Панджика». Янгутов и Лепехов исследуют специфику рецепции буддизма в Китае, Тибете, Монголии и России. Нестеркин публикует тезисы Б. Барадийна к лекции Агвана Дорджиева, раскрывающие трактовку буддизма бурятскими буддистами-обновленцами.

Бурмистров анализирует взгляды на историю буддизма индийских историков философии, Волкова — концепции буддийской этики в современной аналитической философии.

Ключевые слова: Будда, буддизм, буддийская философия, религия, махаяна, хинаяна, абхидхарма, сансара, освобождение, архат, бодхисаттва, Индия, Китай, Тибет, Монголия, Россия

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The selection of articles on Mahāyāna philosophy offered to the reader of this special issue reflects some critical lines of research in this field, belonging to seven Russian (Ostrovskaya, Ivanov, Yangutov, Lepekhov, Nesterkin, Burmistrov, and Volkova), one Lithuanian (Korobov) and one Indian (Gokhale) Buddhist scholar. The latter one is in English.

Mahāyāna (*mahā* literally 'great,' 'broad,' 'large,' *yāna* 'path,' 'vehicle') is the self-designation of the teachings of those followers of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, who sought to emphasize that their interpretation of these teachings were more generally accessible and pursued more profound and fundamental goals than these pertaining to the teachers who saw the meaning of the Buddha's message, or Dharma, in the attaining the ideal of an *arhat* — a Buddhist saint who, having purified himself from 'afflicted' states of consciousness and having experienced enlightenment (*bodhi*), revealing to him the true nature of things, became capable to attain the state of *nirvāṇa* (literally 'blown out,' meaning the eradication of all passions or affects — the main "fuel" of *saṃsāra*, the endless cycle of rebirth). Practically, this means that an enlightened being (hence the title *Buddha*) will no longer be reborn.

The Mahāyāna followers defined such an ideal and goal as a narrow path — Hīnayāna, where the word *hīna* ('narrow', 'lesser') implies a negative connotation — 'unnecessarily small,' 'selfish,' 'discipleship' (synonymous with Hīnayāna is Śrāvakayāna, the vehicle of *śravakas*, mere 'listeners').

In other words, the term Mahāyāna is an apologetic self-designation, implying a critical evaluation of the rival competing Buddhist tradition as a less perfect one and demanding a harsh disassociation from it. Indeed, Buddhism underwent a genuinely radical transformation in its evolution from a doctrine about the path of individual self-perfection and liberating enlightenment to a pan-Asian religion with its vast pantheon, esotericism, and a multitude of local cultic and ritual traditions and institutions, as Mahāyāna developing itself into a pan-Asian religion by the 9th century A.D.

However, the term *Hīnayāna*, because of its apparent pejorative connotation, was never recognized by those for whom it was intended. Then we came across a problem — how could we call the followers of pre- or non Mahāyāna Buddhism? Since the adepts of this form of Buddhism have not coined a universally recognized self-designation, they often identify themselves as Traditional Buddism or Conservative Buddism followers, or by the name of one of their schools, especially Theravāda (the School of the Elders), which is associated with the Buddhist teachings in the Pāli Buddhist canon *Tripiṭaka*. Of all the canons, it is considered to be the most ancient one. Only a small part of the Sanskrit version of the canon has survived to our days.

It is vital to take in consideration that the Buddha's teaching was initially transmitted orally in the spoken language (Prakrit), conditionally called *Ardhamagadhi*, which was in circulation in the early state of Magadha. Since only some fragments of it have reached us, there is not enough evidence to identify its linguistic profile in a more satisfactory way. The Pāli language is also a Prakrit, the one in which the entire Buddhist canon was first written down around the 1-st century A.D. In the absence of a better solution in the academic parlance, the followers of the "individual path of liberation" were often separated from the Mahayanists on the geographical grounds as *Southern Buddhism* (countries of South-East Asia) and *Northern Buddhism* (Tibet, Korea, Far East — China and Japan).

However, despite the crucial differences between these religious and philosophical trends, the Mahāyāna should not be understood as a complete break with the preceding tradition. Embedded in the very foundation of Buddhism as such is the the accommodation of the Buddha's message to the demand of a person or audience to which it is addressed, known as the principle of *skillful means* (*upāyakauśalya*). In the most general form, it can be formulated as follows. To be effective, i.e., to bring real benefit — therapeutic or soteriological effect — it is necessary to take in consideration the system of ideas and values characteristic to each person or each audience coming to attend the Buddha's talk. It is with the help of this principle that we can explain many different national and cultural "Buddhist worlds," and not only the difference between Hīnayāna (the audience of ascetics who chose *for themselves* the path of self-restraint and psycho-practices) and Mahāyāna (the general public led by ascetics-boddhisattvas aimed at helping *others*). However, one should not be mistaken about the "accessibility" of Mahāyāna: for all its, so to say, "populism," it has been developed out of earlier quite esoteric teachings. It introduced esoterism into the flesh and blood of Buddhist practice, which became impossible without special and complicated "initiations."

Nevertheless, there is a very entrenched, fundamental continuity between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna — these two main "Buddhist universes" — in the form of the *Abhidharma* theory, initially developed by the so-called Hīnayāna Buddhists. Abhidharma (literally "higher Dharma") as a Buddhist discipline of knowledge [1] is a theoretically refined classification of psychological states or events (dharmas)

isolated in the individual stream of consciousness during such meditative practices as smṛti (Sanskrit) or sati (Pāli) and represented in the appropriate texts [2]. These are the practices of retaining attention to just-past events of consciousness (comparable to retention in phenomenology). These events are labeled as dharmas (in plural)[1]. The classifications, or catalogs, of dharmas, constituted the basis of Mahāyāna philosophical, discursive, and psychophysical disciplines.

The Indian Mahāyāna philosophical schools — Madhyamaka and Yogācāra — had different attitudes towards Abhidharma and Abhidharmic analysis (analysis of experience in terms of momentary states — dharmas). The former (personified by its founder Nāgārjuna, 2nd century C.E.) criticized this approach as too "eternalist," fraught with the assumption of the existence, if not of a substantive "self" (like the Brahmanic Ātman), then of a stream (*santana*) of *dharmas* preserving a particular self-identity of the person, i.e., and by this allowing a certain substantialism/essentialism in the form of the thesis about a real existence of individual *dharmas*. Nāgārjuna believed that this contradicted the Buddha's teaching of *anattā* (absence of self — even if it is momentary).

The second (incarnated in the person of Vasubandhu, 4th century A.D.) drew extensively on the Abhidharma. Vasubandhu created the Abhidharma compendium, the *Abhidharmakośa*, with the *Bhāsya* auto-commentary. His commentary is generally considered to reflect the position of the Hīnayāna school of Sautrāntika, but the Yogācāra "affiliation" of the Kośa's author is also widely discussed in contemporary Buddhology [5]. Thus, the significance of the Abhidharma for these authoritative Mahāyāna school is also recognized. In the Tibetan version of the Madhyamaka — the Geluk school and several other schools — the study of the Abhidharma is included in the Buddhist education program.

Precisely because of the fundamental nature and significance of the Abhidharma for the subsequent trends of Buddhism (whether its evaluation was positive or critical), the first article of our special collection is a study of the authoritative Russian scholar of Indian Buddhist philosophy, and especially, of Abhidharmic literature Helena Ostrovskaya, a translator from Sanskrit (together with Valerii Isaevich Rudoi) of the full text of the *Abhidharmakośa* ("The Treasury of Abhidharma") mentioned above in eight parts (see the bibliography to this article).

The subject of her analysis is the Buddhist Abhidharmic ethical discourse concerning the causal status attributed to the states of consciousness associated with acts of violence and murder, and the karmic consequences (punishment) they entail. Obviously, in Abhidharma, murder, whether intentional or unintentional, carried out or planned, entails some karmic retribution.

In Mahāyāna, the situation is more complicated since the agents of liberation are not ordinary people who have decided to attain nirvāṇa but only boddhisattvas — people who take a vow to help others and to postpone their own attainment of *nirvāṇa* until there is no more suffering of living beings left in the

[1] Read more about dharmas in plural and Dharma as a teaching in [3; 4].

world. Their moral status is subordinated to the fulfillment of this task above all, even if they have to commit murder (the story of a robber who was killed by the boddhisattva to prevent him from carrying out his plan to take the lives of 500 people), and to deceit (the story of the children who were lured out of a burning house by their parents with the help of a promise to buy toys that they had no intention of fulfilling). Having a clear understanding that a crime remains as such and will be punished with the full rigor of karmic retribution, the bodhisattva nevertheless sacrifices himself for the good of other living beings.

Ostrovskaya's study resonates with the article by the Indian guest of this issue, well known philosopher and scholar Pradeep Gokhale, on the phenomenon of death in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. The researcher raises some fundamental questions that lead him to a conclusion regarding the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism. If, according to Hīnayāna, or Śrāvakayāna, as he prefers to designate this branch of Buddhism, it is believed that the Buddha, having emerged from *saṃsāra*, attained *nirvāṇa*, and thus ceased to exist, how does this differ from death? Why is it that when asked whether the Tathāgata (as the Buddha is called) exists after death *o*r whether he does not exist, whether he exists *and* does not exist, or whether he does exist and does *not* not exist (a form of tetralemma often found in early Buddhist texts), the Buddha refuses to reply, referring to these questions as having no definite categorical answer (*avyākṛta*)? In reality, the answer is seemingly obvious — since the Buddha does not exist after death, the Tathāgata does not exist either.

Gokhale suggests that the nature of the Tathāgata is indescribable regarding such dichotomies, which explains why the Buddha refuses to answer such questions. Nevertheless, these questions themselves still remain, and they are pretty harsh. Therefore the ideal of arhat that implies a complete cessation of the cycle of births and deaths is possible. That is why, the death of the arhat is his complete disappearance from all planes of existence — without any remnant of personality. Ontologically, the Buddha is a kind of an arhat; therefore, the Buddha, like any other arhat, cannot exist after death.

On the other hand, however, the Buddha cannot cease to exist, for he must continue to direct all beings to the path of the Teaching, the Dhamma (Pāli), or Dharma (Sanskrit), since he has defined himself as a "Dharma teacher." If the Dharma continues to exist after the Buddha, Gokhale argues, it must have been endowed with a permanent ontological status. However, it is logical to attribute the same status to the Buddha himself. According to Gokhale, Buddhism, in order to become a religion, had to provide a satisfying religious answer to the problem of Buddha's death, and this, he emphasizes, could be one of the main driving forces behind the development of Mahāyāna: "the transition from Śrāvakayāna to Mahāyāna marks a paradigm shift. The concepts of Buddha and Dhamma, which were human-centric in the Śrāvakayāna, assume the status of metaphysical reality in Mahāyāna. The Buddha, that is, the Śākyamuni Buddha and his teachings are

accommodated in the new framework, but they are given secondary status."[2]. In other words, they become illusory projections of the Buddha principle (Buddhahood, Dharmakāya), considered to be the only real one.

The topic of Abhidharma receives an interesting *structuralistic* interpretation in Vladimir Korobov's paper in which he proposes to interpret the Abhidharmic analysis as a particular cognitive strategy aiming to exclude the possibility of raising the problem of the existence of the "self" (ātman), and to remove all the figures of correlative (subject-predicate) schematizations in the discourses, such as "cognizing consciousness" — "cognizable objects," etc.

The final stage in the development of Buddhist Sanskrit philosophy in India is associated with the names of famous Buddhist thinkers Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, both lived in the 8th century. Russian scholar of Buddhist and Hindu studies Vladimir Ivanov has developed an original interpretation of the composition principles which he detected in their fundamental work *Tattva-saṃgraha* with the commentary *Pañjikā*. These are connected, in his opinion, with the psycho-practical purpose of changing the state of mind of persons who are studying this work with the help of a suggestive introduction into their consciousness of the Buddhist cognitive causal *pratītyasamutpāda* scheme — a dependent origination sequence. Its primary purpose is to show that all phenomena in the world (*dharmas*) are interdependent, and in this sense, they are "empty" (*śūnya*) — devoid of their proper nature (*svabhāva*).

Since the 3rd century C.E., Buddhism has penetrated into China, and its main vehicles were not Indian Buddhist monks (Buddhism, in principle, rejects proselytizing) but Chinese pilgrims in India, who themselves imported the new religion and introduced it into their own cultural framework. An article authored by Leonid Yangutov is devoted to studying Chinese varieties of Buddhism. From it, it it follows that on the Chinese soil, Buddhism had been strongly influenced by Chinese mentality, which significantly transformed Buddhist doctrine, developing in it some rather strong tendencies to ontologization and naturalization of some ideas similar to the Advaitist idea of the Absolute, or Ātman. It goes about the concepts of Tathātā ('suchness'), Tathāgatagarbha ('the womb/embryo of suchness'), the Dharmakāya ('Dharma Body'), the Buddha-nature inherent in all beings (and even natural phenomena — in Zen Buddhism). In the same veil, with such a quasi-essentialist theory, we find in China the concept of instantaneous liberating enlightenment instead of liberation through a gradual accumulation of merits in the form of study and experiential implementations of texts within the different lines of transmission (parampara) established in India.

The value of scholarship (extensive learning of texts) and the importance of long-term intensive practices based on specific texts are questioned, which, in my opinion, results in a somewhat militant anti-intellectualism characteristic of Chinese Chan and its development in Japanese Zen. This phenomenon can also be observed among some contemporary Russian Buddhists, who are convinced that

[2] See: P. Gokhale's study "Buddhist Perspectives on Death" in the same issue of the journal.

practice is above all else and, therefore, there is no need to spend time studying texts and familiarizing oneself with the intellectual achievements of Buddhism.

Yangutov's article contrasts the Chinese approach with the Tibetan one, latter maintains a line of continuity with classical Indian "intellectually sophisticated" Buddhism in the spirit of Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, and the earlier Buddhist epistemological philosophers Dharmakīrti, and Dignāga.

The development of the philosophical schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism — Madhyamaka and Yogācāra in Tibet, China, etc. — is explored by Sergeii Lepekhov, a specialist in Mahāyāna philosophy. He investigates the example of different interpretations of the two truths theory: relative and absolute — incredibly sophisticated in Tibetan Buddhism — where they received a deep and thorough elaboration in diverse logical aspects of the scholastic system characteristic of the Buddhist Tibetan scholarship.

Finally, the first publication of the Buryat scholar and educator B. Baradin's theses to a failed lecture on Buddhism by his Buddhist mentor Agvan Dorzhiev (both of whom were victims of Soviet repressions in the 1930s—1940s) completes the overall picture of Mahāyāna philosophy with a sample of the discourse developed within the Russian post-revolutionary culture and early Soviet ideology of Buddhist Buryat reformer-novices.

It is significant that the source of ideas, in the perspective of which these reformers saw the renewal of Buddhism, was modern science — physics (theory of relativity) and physiology. One could say that they were ahead of their time, prophetically foreseeing the turn of Buddhism to science in our time — the neuroscience of consciousness, psychology, quantum physics, and neurobiology. It was initiated by the present 14th Dalai Lama, who, together with neuroscientist Francisco Varela, created the *Mind & Life Institute*, which started more than thirty years ago the annual dialogues between modern scientists and Buddhist monks. The latter have begun to receive systematic Western education not only in the West but recently also in the Tibetan monasteries themselves, where the teaching of Western science has been introduced. In 2018, at the first international conference, *The Nature of Consciousness* (Delhi, August 2017), the first dialog between Russian scientists and philosophers with the Dalai Lama and Buddhist monks occurred[3].

The article by Indologist philosopher Sergei Burmistrov opens a block of Buddhist historical and philosophical studies. It directs the reader's attention to vivid examples in the history of interpreting Yogācāra philosophy in India. The author convincingly shows to what extent the interpretation of the doctrines of this school depended on the intellectual, ideological, and political context in which Indian philosophers pertaining to different epochs of India's development — late-colonial and postcolonial — created their conceptions of the history of Buddhism. Although there were doxographies in Indian classical philosophy, such as the

[3] The Nature of Consciousness. Conversations of the Dalai Lama with Russian scientists // Proceedings of the First International Conference "Fundamental Knowledge: Dialogue between Russian and Buddhist Scientists". Lysenko V, editor. Moscow: Fund "Save Tibet"; 2023.

Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha (*A Compendium of all the Philosophical Systems*), the historical and philosophical concepts developed by Indian historians of philosophy in Burmistrov's article were largely the product of their encounters with Western philosophical thought, in response to the challenges of which they proposed different apologetic strategies. Even if, at first glance, the rapprochement between Buddhism and Neo-Vedanta may appear to be a maneuver for which the context of Indian culture itself was reasonably sufficient, this is not quite so. Neo-Vedanta itself is, in many ways, an apologetic reaction to the universalist claims of Christianity (cf. Swami Vivekananda's speech to the World Congress of Religions in 1895).

The concept of universalism on Indian soil is usually called *inclusivism* (in Paul Hacker's term), meaning the recognition of other points of view, other philosophical and religious teachings only as some preparatory stages, partially true approaches to the supreme universal truth embodied only in one's own tradition, which for most Neo-Vedantic philosophers was the monistic doctrine of Adi Śankara's Advaita Vedānta.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Surendranath Dasgupta, Poola Tirupati Raju, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, A.K. Chatterjee and other protagonists of this article demonstrate an excellent knowledge of Western philosophy, enabling them to erect their views on the similarity of Indian philosophy with it, on a solid conceptual foundation. Although, in their view, Indian philosophy often "outplayed" the Western one in one respect or another, they can — with various reservations — be considered as forerunners of contemporary postcolonial intercultural thinkers. An example of the latter is one of the characters in Burmistrov's article, David Kalupahana, and his teacher, K.N. Jayatilleke, a student of Wittgenstein (1920—1970). As Sri Lankan Buddhists, they were educated in England in the spirit of analytic philosophy of their era, which enabled them to present Buddhist concepts in a form acceptable and easily readable to Western philosophers without sacrificing their original content.

The analytical review by Vlada Volkova, a Lomonosov Moscow State University graduate student, also contributes to this topic by introducing the reader to the modern Western analytical treatment of Buddhist principles of morality and ethics. There is no doubt that Buddhist ethics is, in many respects, a Western construct, not because Buddhists have neglected moral discourse, for they have not, even judging from the articles in this collection (especially those by H.P. Ostrovskaya). However, in Buddhism as a soteriological doctrine, ethical categories are attributed to the ordinary, lowest level of experience, to which the dichotomy of good and evil, believed to be overcome in the state of enlightenment, bodhi, actually belongs.

Although the problem of free will does not find direct parallels in Buddhism, there is much indirect evidence for the presence in the Buddhist worldview of the notions revealing person's subjectivity and agency in committing moral and immoral actions. These notions are to be found in the Buddhist doctrine of karma,

especially in its idea that karmic consequences are determined by person's intention, or motive for her or his action, and, not by bodily and speech acts in themselves. Buddhism is thought to have brought an ethical perspective to the interpretation of karma. Would this have been possible if Buddhism shared a position of hard determinism? Of course not!

When we turn to the terms of self-description of the Indian tradition, among the traditional characteristics of karma, we will find two components that are crucial for our topic: *daiva* (interpreted as predestination, fate, fatum) and *puruṣakāra* (that which is determined by human actions) [6]. The first one refers to all those factors that each person inherits from previous rebirths, such as body — healthy or sick — social status, character, temperament, etc. Nevertheless, the second one is essential, stemming from the most crucial point of Indian anthropology, which claims that among all categories of inhabitants of the universe (gods, people, animals, hungry spirits, ancestors, and inhabitants of hells), only humans are capable to change their karma; the others only consume it, "paying off the bills," if I may put it this way.

Buddhism emphasizes that consciousness is the primary factor in changing a person's karma. This fundamental position alone allows us to conclude that Buddhism recognizes the subjectivity and responsibility of an individual and put to the fore the causal relationship between actions and their moral consequences. However, it formulates these ideas while basing not so much on a direct reference to free will but on the recognizing person's agency (puruṣakāra) concerning her or his destiny.

In early Buddhist texts, one finds terms revealing an awareness in Buddhism of problems analogous to the problem of determinism-indeterminism, which are used in reference to various doctrines (vāda) contemporary to the historical Buddha): *kriyāvāda* (the doctrine of the efficacy of human actions), that is, man is the subject and agent of moral and immoral actions that lead to karmic consequences, favorable or unfavorable; and *akriyāvāda* (the doctrine of the futility of human actions) based on either fatalism (*niyativāda*), the domination of chance, or accidentialism (*yaddṛchāvāda*), or theism (*iśvarahetuvāda*).

The latter is especially significant — theism for Buddhists is fraught with two vices: first, it relies on faith (*śrāddha*)[4], which is not highly valued in the Buddha's teaching — it is impossible to achieve the highest goal of Buddhism — liberation from *saṃsāra* — with its help. Secondly, faith avoids responsibility because "agency" is transferred from man to god or other living beings, and it turns out that people become righteous or unrighteous as a result of someone else's will, not of their own, and, therefore, are not responsible for anything, which is unacceptable for Buddhism. The Buddha ridicules such views. As well as the belief in the purifying power of rituals — if ablution rites were to purify from moral filth, the most "holy" would be fish and other creatures living in the water. As for the causal relations between a person's actions and moral consequences, they are developed

[4] For more information about the meaning of faith in Buddhism, ref. [7].

in Buddhism in great detail. In the Abhidharma, there are multifactorial classifications of causal relations, ranging from the *pratītyasamutpāda* [8] to the Abhidharmic catalogs of *hetu* and *pratyaya* — direct causes and more indirect conditions [9].

This provides good reasons to compare Buddhist views on moral responsibility with Western notions of free will, determinism, indeterminism, compatibilism, and the like.

Having familiarized with the materials of the issue, the reader of this special issue will get an idea of some important topics and issues discussed in contemporary Russian and international Buddhological studies.

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